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"Open the Pod Bay Doors, Hal."

Although I'm writing these words on the first day of the 21st century and of the Third Millenium C.E.-- a frosty January morning -- my mind keeps drifting back to 1976, when I first read the words of (Sir) Arthur C. Clarke's The Lost Worlds of 2001 (Signet, 1972):

"Between the first and last decades of the Twentieth Century lay a gulf greater than the wildest imagination could have conceived. It was the gulf between gunpowder and nuclear bomb, between messages tapped in morse code and global television from the sky, between Queen Victoria, Empress of India, and Kwame Chaka, Supreme President of the African Federation. But above all, it was the gulf between the first hundred-foot flight at Kitty Hawk, and the first billion-mile mission to the moons of Jupiter..."

Perhaps Sir Arthur's foresight failed him in regard to the African Federation, but his book's opening paragraph is perhaps truer than ever. From his vantage point in the awestruck and iconoclastic Sixties, like a latter-day Nostradamus, Clarke predicted the next thirty years with a series of hits and misses: Yes, the newspad employed by his future astronauts would come about in the shape of PDA's and laptops we use today; his Space Station One came about in the guise of the smaller Space Station Alpha; the billion-mile mission to the moons of Jupiter has been accomplished by the Pioneer, Voyager and Galileo probes. No, there is no sprawling moonbase on Clavius or a spaceship *Discovery* poised to deliver us to distant Iapetus. But on this first day of 2001, the promise set forth in his immortal science fiction masterpiece still beckons bright.

An analogy can also be found for ufology and paranormal studies: ten decades separate the Airship Scare of the 1890's and Camille Flammarion's work on the occult from the Alien Autopsy and Salvador Freixedo's works on the mystery of interaction with secretive intelligences. From their vantage point in the 1950s or 1960s, could Donald Keyhoe, Aime Michel, Waveney Girvan or Antonio Ribera have predicted the future of their chosen field of research with better accuracy than Clarke in his? Perhaps, perhaps not. But as is the case with *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the promise of ufology and high strangeness remain tantalizingly bright for the century that dawns today.

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Starstrikes: Calling Cards from the Cosmos?
by Scott Corrales

The story has been told in every language and in every single possible context from simple history to science-fiction: how in the summer of 1908 a strange object -- sometimes meteorite, sometimes a cometary fragment, sometimes an alien spaceship -- crashed into, or vaporized over, a remote area in the Siberian wilderness known as Tunguska. Haunting photos of the event's aftereffects are burned into our consciousness and have even graced the covers of rock and roll albums: thousands of trees pointing away from the disaster like so many carefully laid out matchsticks. Stories of the still-unexplained Siberian devastation are equally gripping, and when the first Soviet expeditions made their way to the area decades later, they were startled to find that the local Tungus tribespeople had attributed the event to a surprise visit by the fire-god Adgy.

However, any small comfort offered by both time and distance vanishes when we examine the more immediate crashes on our own continent.

South America: A Cosmic Dart Board

On August 13, 1930 a strange explosion very similar to the one at Tunguska took place at Rio Curaca on a jungle riverbank on the border between Perú and Brazil. Word of the event was brought back to civilization by Catholic missionaries doing the Lord's work in Amazonia and printed in the Vatican's own *L'Osservatore Romano*. According to the eyewitnesses, their attention was drawn to the phenomenon by a high-pitched whistling sound in the early morning hours. The sun acquired a blood-red cast that frightened the natives and made the missionaries wonder if the time of reckoning might be at hand. The article in *L'Osservatore Romano* makes reference to the highly unusual fact that a rain of fine ash "left a white layer on the jungle leaves" prior to the impact.

Five years later, a second devastating explosion would occur in South America's northern reaches, specifically at Rupununi in British Guyana. According to an article featured in *The Sky* magazine in September 1939, the Guyanan incident occurred under cover of darkness in the month of December 1935. Researcher Serge Korff had visited the remote area only a few months after the event and noted that the area affected by the cosmic one-shot could have been much wider than the one in Tunguska decades earlier: he managed to interview a local miner who had gone to bed early on that fateful evening and was brusquely wakened by the explosion and the sound of his crockery being thrown about in the kitchen. The miner claimed to have visited the impact area and guessed that it roughly measured one hundred twenty square kilometers. Giant rainforest trees had fallen down pointing away from the impact "as if they'd been pushed."

It was not until 1937 that William Holden, a researcher with the American Museum of Natural History, was able to visit the area and climb to the top of a local mountain range: he reported being able to see a devastated area measuring several

miles in diameter whose trees had been sheared off some 20 feet from their bases. Holden also supported the belief that some sort of cosmic impact had been responsible for the event. Subsequent researchers found that the area had been covered over by the exuberant rainforest in a matter of years.

Researchers agreed that common factors in the Brazilian and Guyanan cases were the ear-splitting sound produced by the object and the fact that both events occurred during annual meteor showers --the Perseids and Geminids--in their respective years and are identifiable with the penetration of Earth's atmosphere by a small meteor. But even so, there was the niggling suspicion, as with the Tunguska event, that something more than stray cosmic junk may have been involved.

A Second Round of Events

The South American landmass appears to have avoided further insults until only recently, when the vast, thinly populated expanses of Brazil were wounded from above once more.

On October 9, 1999 an enormous sonic boom rent the air above the Amazonian logging camp/village of São Félix do Xingu on a clear afternoon, spreading terror among the lumberjacks and the Kaiapós natives who occupy the area. A scintillating object roared over the city, leaving a wake of black smoke qualified by the onlookers as "similar to that of a rocket". The smoke trail extended for some 18 miles into the nearby mountains as the object disappeared from view.

The inevitable detonation followed seconds later. Witness Gildemar de Souza noted that "it was a colossal explosion, like a bomb, that made the ground shake." Had anyone in the logging camp been of an occultist bent, they might have reasonably assumed that Nostradamus' Great King of Terror had arrived a few months late.

Local radio station "Rede BAND" took it upon itself to organize a search party to find out what had really fallen into the mountains. Members of the radio station's team were almost completely convinced that a meteor of some sort had fallen in the vicinity and discouraged any talk about alien vehicle. This choice, however laudable, did nothing to discourage speculation among the locals that a stricken spaceship had plowed into their region. Believers in the alien hypothesis bolstered their belief with the fact that no distress calls had been received concerning any downed Brazilian aircraft.

Rede BAND's expedition used a small aircraft to get as close to the site of events as possible, and then employed a small boat to reach the Xingu's headwaters. Friendly Kaiapó tribesmen led them to the spot in the jungle where the crash occurred and the tropical vegetation still smoldered a full two weeks after the impact: giant hardwoods had been uprooted and burned and the jungle floor had been furrowed. No traces of machinery or meteoritic rock were in evidence; stranger still was an odd area where the trees pointed away from impact's probable epicenter. All of this puzzled Rómulo Angélica, the Rede BAND expedition's geologist, who was at a loss to explain how despite the fact that the area looked like a meteor-stricken landscape should look, the lack of a "culprit" was very distressing to the scientists -- as was a peculiar odor which did not resemble any smell that the expedition members were able

to immediately identify.

Although they did not say so, perhaps some of the expedition members were recalling the still-unexplained Divinolandia impact six years earlier.

In the spring of 1994, farmer Trajano Martins and his wife, residents of the municipality of Divinolandia deep in the state of Sao Paulo, were startled to hear a sound similar to that of a low-flying helicopter followed by the sound of an explosion. Running out of his house to see what had occurred, he was startled to see a large boulder on a nearby hill completely enveloped in a cloud of white smoke.

Fortunately for the Martins, a surveyor had been shooting the landscape a few miles away and was able to witness an object "reflecting the sun's light" fall out of the sky directly toward the location indicated by the farmer. This corroboration prompted the University of Sao Paulo to send out a team to investigate the event and recover the meteorite. However, their efforts were in vain: not even the smallest fragment of rock was found. The research team's verdict was that if a meteor had been involved, it must have buried itself into the ground.

But this explanation did not suffice for members of the *Grupo Ufologico de Guarujá*, who contacted Professor Francisco Donizetti and asked him to look further into the matter. Glad to oblige, the scholar visited Divinolandia and was impressed by the way in which the large boulder had been shattered by whatever external force had been brought to bear against it. He corroborated the lack of any meteoritic fragments and ventured the suggestion that the event may have been a "shock wave of an unknown nature", remarking that a similarly strange event had taken place in the late '70s at Aguas da Prata, where a strange celestial object had fallen on a coffee plantation, setting it on fire and creating a hole well over fifty feet (16 m) deep.

Argentina's Aeroliths or Saucers?

Many people in South America, particularly those given to reading books on the spiritism of Allan Kardec and esoterica in general, had been keenly aware of the arrival of the year 1999 and the dreadful cataclysmic portents for the "seventh month" of said year forecast by Michel de Nostradamus in the 16th century concerning a "king of terror" that would appear in the sky. When nothing happened, trepidation increased rather than abated, since the cosmic intruder was probably delayed for reasons not even Nostradamus could have explained on a good night. The terrifying omen would appear like the thief in the night described by the Apostle Paul.

On Tuesday, January 25, 2000, the noontime routine of the Argentinean village of Sachayoj in the Andean foothills was disrupted by Nostradamus' late arrival: an object described as a glowing ball of flame roared across the daylight skies, rending the air with dull, deafening roar and frightening the locals into prayer. What happened shortly afterward was a repetition of the Brazilian incidents--a loud explosion was heard throughout the Santiago del Estero region as energy was released from the impact point. The ground shook, although not as powerfully as it might in this earthquake-prone part of the Americas. It was all over in a matter of minutes, and the townspeople's gratitude at being spared turned into normal human inquisitiveness: had it

really been a bolide, or was it a crashed UFO similar to the one which had allegedly fallen in 1995 near the Argentinean town of Metán, some 200 miles to the north? UFOs had already been reported earlier in January over the military facilities at Puerto Belgrano, so anything was possible at this juncture.

It took a few days for teams of specialists from all over Argentina to gather their instruments and report to Santiago del Estero, the largest city closest to Sachayoj. The military and their scientific advisors proceeded to comb the area for signs of the alien object--whether natural or artificial--but were soon hampered by the local geography of thick forests covering yawning canyons and gullies -- uninhabited and mostly unexplored, but filled with a variety of subtropical animals on both banks of the Salado River Finding the object would involve the daunting prospect of doing it all on foot, aided by the seasoned backwoodsmen who inhabited the region.

Town commissioner Olga Bertolotti told journalists that a farm worker at an *estancia* (ranch) known as Fabril Chaqueña had witnessed the object's descent and that the local police was reading the required expedition based on the man's indication. Bertolotti informed the *Intervoz de Córdoba* newspaper that "with the arrival of the year 2000 and apocalyptic beliefs, townspeople are concerned about the strange object that fell from the sky

and are following the events closely." The Commissioner also added that her greatest concern was the awareness that the object had fallen from space and was therefore an unknown quantity. It is not entirely unreasonable to surmise the Bertolotti was aware of her region's propensity toward abnormal activity: not only had something odd fallen near Metán a few years ago, but the area was also one of the country's ufological hot spots. The spectacular Trancas Case (in which a farmhouse was besieged by six UFOs which deployed "heat rays" against it) had taken place not too far away, and the city of Salta and its extensive history of unusual celestial events was a nearby regional capital.

Reporters also took an interest in some of the eyewitness accounts brought to their attention, such as the testimony of school janitor Ramon Agustín, who explained that the event had filled him with "considerable panic and fear" given the sheer size and rapid descent of the mystery object, whose loud, thundering noise caused domestic animals to run amok. "I looked at it and felt paralyzed, I didn't know what to do. After the event, I ran away and stayed with my family," he told the press.

A full week since the mystery object burned a path across the skies of northern Argentina, the authorities determined that the villages of Tintina, Otumpa, Sachayoj and the marches of the Gran Chaco were the likeliest to hold the answer to the mystery. Journalists had discovered that the area's inhabitants--normally taciturn farmers--had become quite talkative about this intrusion into the sedate lifestyle. The owner of one business establishment was even able to pinpoint the location of the alleged crash site basing himself on the descriptions given by his clientele. Another local told reporters of fellow residents who had hired themselves out as guides to the growing number of technicians and officials engaged in searching for the object in the vegetation-covered canyonlands of the area.

As the search expanded to cover other possible crash

locations the office of the *comisario* (sheriff) in the town of Quimilí rejected suggestions that an aircraft may have been involved, adding that the eyewitnesses' reports seemed to agree with the collision having occurred at a place known as Campo del Cielo --Heaven's Field--where a massive meteorite shower appears to have occurred millennia ago (an area similar to Mexico's Zone of Silence, which would appear to exert a certain attraction over inbound celestial objects)

Much in the same way as with the Xingú crash of 1999, the private expeditions seemed to have a higher profile and better luck than the official ones. A radio station (Radio Mocovi) and a television station (Charata Cable) hired a small plane to fly their respective crews over the possible impact site. According to radio broadcaster Juan Carlos Barros " [the area covered] is a

forested area and no anomaly could be observed which might have been caused by the possible fall of an object. It is an area of great size, and if that's where it fell, it would take a great deal of effort to reach the area and search it."

The Santiago del Estero meteorite/bolide/UFO story faded from the paper after a few weeks after experts and local guides alike threw in the metaphorical towel. As in the Divinolandia case in Brazil, the object had behaved like the Cheshire Cat--but this time not even its smile remained.

The Mexican Bolides

Paulina González was a highly intelligent young woman from the town of Villa Cardel, Veracruz -- not far from Jalapa, the state capital. She had entered into the service of the author's family in Mexico City and quickly became an inseparable member of the family, playing the roles of housekeeper and companion with equal ease. Her qualities as a storyteller were unparalleled, particularly concerning the smallest details of farm life in rural Mexico.

Perhaps one of her most memorable accounts was the story of the day "the world almost came to an end" had it not been--she was convinced--through the intercession of the Virgin of Guadalupe and a supporting cast of lesser-known saints.

It was noon in Villa Cardel and she was returning home from school for the midday meal when she noticed people screaming and pointing to the heavens as a "white ball of fire" bore down on the town. Shouts of "the world is ending" rang from people's throats, but the bolide never struck the earth...it continued on its path out to sea.

Paulina retold the story a number of times, but it would not be until many years later that I would come upon a similar account highlighting the state of Veracruz's proclivity toward these phenomena in John Keel's Operation Trojan Horse: residents of the city of Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico were wakened by the a loud rumbling sound in the early morning hours of March 27, 1968. One witness to this terrifying event remarked that the source of light and its attendant noise made her feel cool at first and then cold, as night was turned into a frightening semblance of a daytime that was still many hours away. The light intensified and the ground shook as if in resonance. Again, before the world ended on that occasion, the "bolide" appeared to rise again and vanish. Keel notes that corroboration for the

event was made by the crew of a Mexican warship and an oil tanker some twenty-five miles away from Veracruz. These distant onlookers were able to describe it as "two or three objects in the center of a bright ball of fire."

But we would be mistaken to limit these bizarre near-misses (if they in fact are) to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Little over a year after the still-unexplained incident over Veracruz, a colossal bolide appeared in the early morning skies over the northern Mexican desert. February 8, 1969 could have been a date every bit as memorable as Tunguska--written in letters of fire--as residents of Ceballos, Durango woke up to the blinding light of a fiery sphere that headed straight for their town, illuminating every feature of the rocky desert and causing understandable feelings of dread. The rumbling sound of the object filled the streets of Ceballos as the townspeople came out to see what could well be their last day on earth.

But unlike the Veracruz objects, this bolide stayed on course and was not deviated by any unnatural force. It hit the ground near the village of Pueblito de Allende--scant miles from Ceballos--and its shock wave fanned out almost immediately, causing a deafening clap of sound.

The Allende Meteorite is a matter of public record, but what is less known is that the Zone of Silence, this arbitrary patch of desert at the location where the states of Durango, Coahuila and Chihuahua meet, is constantly peppered by smaller stones mysteriously attracted to the region from outer space. These skyfalls have added to the Zone's reputation as an enchanted region. Similar "meteorite attractors" exist in other locations, such as the aforementioned "Campo del Cielo" in Argentina.

Conclusion

Living, as we do, in an age obsessed with the possible obliteration of our civilization due to meteorite impacts, interest in the subject is high and has spawned a number of motion pictures and book projects. But we needn't go as far as northern Asia to find some amazing stories: on the 10th of August, 1972, North America almost had its very own Tunguska as a massive meteor, having an estimated weight of two million pounds, burned its way into Earth's atmosphere leaving a wake of sonic booms over the state of Utah. Closing in at nine miles a second, the space rock seemed ready to slam against our planet until it rebounded against the denser air of the lower atmosphere and gently returned back into space. Astronomers estimated that the object's trajectory was leading it toward ground zero in southern Canada, slamming into the province of Alberta with a force equivalent to a 400-kiloton nuclear bomb.

One gets the impression that, like a cat, Earth seems to be running out of lives...

The South American republic of Chile managed to maintain a high profile throughout 2000 due to the depredations of the Chupacabras. Nevertheless, Chile's prominence in the UFO field stems from its vast case histories over the years. Chilean expert Raúl Núñez examines a possible crash/retrieval scenario.

UFO Crash/Retrievals in Chile
by Raúl Núñez

On October 7, 1998 at 15:45 hours, residents of Paihuano, a small village in Valle de Elqui (Chile) underwent an extraordinary experience which kept its 2,500 residents on the edge of their seats. A flying object described as having a metallic color and measuring some 15 meters across remained motionless over the Las Mollacas hill, from which the entire town could be seen.

The object began to rise and abruptly made a sudden turn that split it in two before the awestruck witnesses. One part of the object fell on hill's peak and the other behind it. Accounts collected on the field by this correspondent among the many persons who witnessed the uncanny event lead us to consider the following events: a) the object witnessed was metallic (silvery); b) the sun's rays reflected off its structure, aiding its visibility; c) Its shape was elongated; d) it remained on the summit of the hill throughout the afternoon of Wednesday the 7th, Thursday the 8th and Friday the 9th, when it was removed by personnel in uniform; e) all of the townsfolk, including mayor Lorenzo Torres, witnessed the event; f) earthquakes were registered after the object fell to the ground; g) electric blackouts covered the entire region; h) radio and TV broadcasts throughout Paihuano, Pisco Elqui and Monte Grande (two neighboring towns) were disrupted.

In view of the alarm caused by the event, a detachment of Carabineros (Chilean militarized police) looked at the object through binoculars and made an effort to reach the area on horseback after confirming the events described by the locals. The rocky soil, composed of sedimentary stone, made getting to the top an arduous affair--it is known that several efforts were made to reach the top and that one of the animals died during the operation. Furthermore, communications between the police forces and their base were successfully intercepted: the law enforcement agents stated that they had found nothing on the summit, but that "comments would be made after the descent."

This transmission was sent by means of "Condor One", the special code employed by local police only in very special cases, and it is the first and only instance of the Carabineros taking part in this matter. 24 hours later, this unit was relieved military personnel dispatched to the area to take charge of the investigation. Independent researchers carried out a survey among the local population to confirm in detail all of the information on what transpired as of the moment that the military forces cordoned off the area.

A Military Operation

Military personnel did not restrict its investigation to the residents of Paihuano--it extended the operation to cover the neighboring towns of Pisco Elqui and Monte Grande, aside from "combing" nearby hills to expel the local muleteers. This correspondent's investigation, conducted jointly with military

analyst and local researcher Roderick Bowen, was able to ascertain that local hotels reported an increase in the demand for lodging by U.S citizens who in all instances claimed to be tourists.

On Friday, October 9, several eyewitnesses described the arrival of trucks bearing uniformed personnel. Residents of the sector nearest the hill, including the goatherds who customarily make use of secondary alternative routes, were issued orders to refrain from ascending the hill and to stay away from the location.

A goatherd who was in the rear of Las Mollacas, and who will not state his name for fear of reprisals, claims having seen the arrival of unmarked helicompters. These vehicles worked tirelessly from midnite until the early hours of Friday the 9th to hoist the object on metallic nets. It was subsequently installed in containers which were dragged to the positions occupied by large trucks belonging to the armed forces.

Researcher Patricio Díaz, who lives in the area, managed to collect several accounts from locals who described the nocturnal operations of these unmarked choppers as they lit vast part of the hill and recovered the strange object on its summit, which shined intensely throughout Thursday the 8th before the startled eyes of Paihuano's residents. Omar Prieto, manager of the "Gabriela Mistral" tourist resort in the town of Pisco Elqui, stated the following: "I had the chance to see it with my own eyes. It was something like the wing of an airplane, everyone could see it. It remained on the hill for 2 1/2 days. After that, it disappeared during the night and there was no further information. Soldiers and members of the Carabineros kept us from going up the hill. Strange things are always going on here, such as blackouts or TV interference. We don't know why."

The site used by the military as their base is known as "La Palmilla" and is located on the slopes of the hill. The tread marks left behind by heavy trucks were in evidence the day after the object was collected, and intense activity was also reported behind the hill. One witness claimed that there was a large cleft, measuring some 5 meters long and some 40 centimeters deep, surrounded by bootprints and heavy vehicle tracks. This account was confirmed hours later by researchers Patricio Díaz, Luis Sánchez Perry, Miguel Jordán and Roderick Bowen, members of ESIO (Equipo Superior de Investigaciones Ovnílogicas), who visited the area to conduct field research.

As of Monday the 12th, persons climbing to the summit of Las Mollacas find stones painted the color of aluminum, clearly giving the appearance of being some sort of premeditated disinformation effort. Surprising hypotheses were aired to explain the strange glare--abandoned beverage bottles, or an optical effect caused by sunlight.

Significant Reactions

The El Tololo astronomical observatory stated unequivocally that the phenomenon had been caused by an out-of-control weather

balloon which had fallen in Las Mollacas. However, Gustavo Rodríguez of the *Dirección General de Aeronáutica Civil* and Secretary of the *Comité de Estudios de Fenómenos Aéreos Anómalos* (CEFAA) made it clear that there was no information regarding the launching of a weather balloon in the area, since all activities of this sort require 48 hours advanced notice.

Strangest of all is that El Tololo assumed powers it didn't have, even going beyond the competence of the CEFAA, while this Air Force-dependent agency recused itself and did not even initiate an investigation into the area, at least not officially. During the interview granted to this correspondent, General Ricardo Bermudez, CEFAA's director, stated that his agency simply had no faith in the events occurred at Paihuano. However, an interesting bit of information emerged in a subsequent conversation with Mario Dusuel, a psychiatric consultant for CEFAA who had visited the area along with geophysicist Carlos Leiva. Apparently, these persons collected the testimony of a muleteer who had been visited by a captain in the Chilean Air Force who questioned him about the object's fall. Now then, if CEFAA officially recused itself in this case, why then did it covertly send some of its best-qualified members to the area?

Incident at Quebrada de Huchumi

Valle de Elqui is a special place. Its soil is rich in minerals and even has uranium deposits which are often related to the UFO phenomenon. On June 15, 1998, only four months prior to the Paihuano incident, an object which had crashed into the snow in the region known as Quebrada de Huchumi was detected, some 20 kilometers from Cerro Tololo. The crash was accompanied by a deafening noise. Windows on many local homes shattered to pieces while an intense, lightning-like flash gave witnesses the impression that "night had turned into day."

The spectacular luminous phenomenon reached the localities of El Indio and Ovalle, located at a distance of some 200 kilometers away. Sudden storms were also detected. Eyewitnesses speak in terms of the panic created: a local taxi driver named Juan Veliz, who carried four passengers along the road from Paihuano to Vicuña, felt powerless in the face of the fear that gripped his passengers. "I'm a highly skeptical person," Veliz told researchers. "But that night last June, my passengers were made very nervous by a great light that flooded the entire valley. It's as if it had suddenly become daylight. I couldn't stop them from getting out of the vehicle in the middle of the road to pray. The fact is that I see lights chasing me constantly when I drive at night. These lights pop out from behind the mountains and I get the impression that they respond to something that's intelligence. I've lived in this valley all my life and many people have seen the same things I have..."

On this occasion, the Quebrada de Huchumi area was also afflicted by a considerable amount of "official" activity. According to eyewitness accounts, the object was recovered and transferred to Vicuña aboard large, containerized military

trucks, in exactly the same way seen months later at Paihuano.

This region is constantly visited by "flying lights" reminiscent of the so-called "Foo Fighters". Only scant days before this researcher arrived in the city of La Serena, that city's lighthouse was "buzzed" by strange lights for some twenty minutes. Local residents are familiar with these phenomena due to their frequency.

Everything points to the fact that the authorities are trying to cover up events which have sometimes escaped from their hands. Too many people witnessed the object on the summit of Las Mollacas hill. Moreover, the fear of reprisals is still palpable when interviewing witnesses. Nevertheless, there are photos of the helicopters busy at work in the region and recordings of communications between the military personnel involved in the recovery operations. All of this material is zealously guarded to avoid complicating the lives of persons living in the area and who have kindly provided their assistance with this investigation. Many of them hold positions in public administration and even political appointments.

An Alien Spaceship?

In the light of these events, it is well worth asking if we are facing the prospect of crashed alien vessels or the collision of secret military prototypes. We must keep in mind that these events coincided with the UNITAS Exercises held jointly by the Chilean and U.S. military.

Some researchers have expressed the belief that it is precisely when said joint exercises are held that UFO activity reaches its highest point in Chile. But there are also considerable accounts which support the suspicion that -- in the cases in question -- crashed alien artifacts could be involved. Thus, for example, the research conducted in Vicuña includes the statements made by a hospital worker who claimed having seen some strange bags during the recovery of the remains of the Las Mollacas object. According to his account, said bags are similar to the body bags employed in collecting corpses.

Are we dealing with a secret military operation or a UFO crash? The numerous accounts regarding the activities conducted to "recover the thing that fell" cannot be ignored.

[**NOTE:** this article originally appeared in *Año Cero* No.06-119]

As we move into the 21st century, one of the primal forces of the UFO phenomenon--the contactee experience--remains unabated despite official scorn, controversial suicides and widespread disappointments. Contributing Editor Manuel Carballal takes a look at this disquieting issue.

Contactees: Talking to the Gods of the New Millennium
by Manuel Carballal

One of the most fascinating and controversial aspects of ufology and the paranormal emerged from the United States precisely at mid-century: the Contactee Phenomenon.

It was 1952 when George Adamski, proprietor of an eatery located at Mount Palomar, openly claimed to be in contact with the crewmen of the flying saucers which had commanded headlines all around the world for about five years at the time. Adamski hoped to certify his contact experiences through a series of spectacular photographs of the flying saucers he communicated with--vehicles which, in his telling, came from the planet Venus and made the journey to Earth inside colossal motherships shaped like giant Havana cigars.

Adamski further claimed to have had physical contact with a Venusian named Orthon, adding that he had even managed to visit the interior of his spaceship,. However, despite his position in the bibliography of the UFO phenomenon as the first contactee, George Adamski wasn't the first human being to have spoken with beings from other worlds...

Prehistory of a Phenomenon

George Adamski is, in fact, a logical by-product in the evolution of a phenomenon such as the one involving UFOs. When a possible extraterrestrial origin was first posited for UFOs in the 1950s, it was foreseeable that it wouldn't be long before characters claiming to be in contact with them would step forward. More so if extraterrestrials are portrayed as a breed of new gods, a technified version of the Divinity adapted to the Space Age.

The fact, however, is that the myth of gods hailing from the stars is far older than the UFO phenomenon and flying saucers. Texts as ancient as the *Mahabharata* make constant mention of gods and demigods traveling among different worlds and stars, and the operation of their vehicles--the *vimanas*--is described in a wealth of detail.

Other even older traditions, like those of the Dogon tribe of Mali, or in Ancient Egypt, speak insistently about the arrival of gods from the stars and their close contact with human beings. In short, George Adamski discovered nothing new: the theologies of the great religions encompass all manner of supernatural entities which at certain moments can enter into contact with human beings: the Islamic djinn, the Hindu asuras and devas, or Christianity's angels, archangels, seraphim, powers, numbers, principalities, etc.

Adamski did nothing more than update [these beliefs] into the Space Age, associating them to the recent UFO pheonomenon--a belief that has been present at the deepest levels of Humankind's collective unconscious since the dawn of history: the belief that it is possible to contact other forms of non-human sentient life.

Contact with Non-Humans

Immediately after Adamski claimed being in contact with the

"space brothers" from the planet Venus, many other U.S. contactees, followed by European ones later, appeared on the international landscape. The names of Daniel Fry and Howard Menger quickly achieved popularity in the U.S., much in the same way that Italy's Eugenio Siragusa and Switzerland's Edouard "Billy" Meier would subsequently achieve notoriety. Even later on, Latin Americans like Charlie and Sixto Paz would spread contacteeism throughout South America, and the inevitable occurred: despite the fact that major contactees tried to break free from any sectarian or religious movements throughout the second half of the 20th century, the number of UFO contact groups having sectarian and pseudoreligious structures proliferates to this very day.

The dreadful mass suicide staged by members of the Heaven's Gate sect in San Diego as an effort to travel in spirit form to the alien vessel allegedly concealed in the wake of Comet Hale-Bopp shows the radical extremes of a disquieting social reality. The fact is that the number saucer cults listed in police ledgers all around the world, linked to high-risk religious cults, is exceedingly high.

Groups like *Hermandad Rama*, the *Ashtar Command*, the *Raelians*, *Edelweiss* or *Nonsiamosoli*, to name only a few, have been regularly and closely observed by the authorities due to being considered dangerous. All of them have a single thing in common: they claim to be in contact with non-human entities which they classify in a variety of ways--aliens, ultraterrestrials, intraterrestrials, etc.

Over the past 45 years, these contact groups, centered around a charismatic personality who claims having maintained personal communication or physical contact with the "guides" from space, have multiplied all over the globe. Many of them do not circumscribe their cosmology to the notion that we are being visited by space faring civilizations, rather, they add religious elements from their respective traditions to said cosmologies. For example, Giorgio Bongiovanni, raised in a country with strong Catholic and Marianist traditions such as Italy, mixes messages from the Blessed Virgin Mary, mystical stigmata and the Third Secret of Fatima with his extraterrestrial contact messages. Latin American contactee Máximo Camargo includes beings such as Viracocha or Quetzalcoatl -- drawn from pre-Colombian traditions -- to his UFO experiences. This allows us to see the growing syncretism within the contactee movement.

On the other hand, some skeptics have noted that the places of origin of the alleged alien visitors has become increasingly distant as the century progressed and space probes showed the absence of life in the heavenly bodies nearest to Earth. Adamski claimed that his aliens came from Venus, and Menger located his on Mars. Charlie and Sixto Paz placed them on one of the moons of Jupiter while Eugenio Siragusa located his own in the heart of our very own sun. Later contactees, like Billy Meier, relocated them out of our solar system, specifically on the alleged planet Erra in the Pleiades.

Recent contactee movements, perhaps to avoid the possibility that space probes will reach their guides' homeworlds too soon and present it as a lifeless world, have sought a more ethereal origin for their guides. The development and dissemination of Quantum physics over the past years has provided contactees with ideas on where to locate the point of origin of their contactors. Thus, a growing number of contactees point to other dimensions, parallel universes, and even antimatter universes (!).

Therefore, it isn't reckless to predict that the future of the contactee phenomenon, at least as related to the supposed origin of the "guides", shall be closely linked with new discoveries in the fields of physics and astronomy. Otherwise, hang around long enough and you'll see.

The Technology of Alien Contact

Techniques for contacting non-humans have also evolved considerably along the course of the 20th century. Currently, some groups scattered around the world claim to have picked up radio signals from outer space through crude radio receivers built according to the instructions given to them by the aliens themselves. Yet this is merely one of the many ways in which modern technology has been applied to contacteeism.

Other contactee groups, such as the vanished *Más Allá* sect, not only claimed to have maintained physical and personal contact with alleged aliens and with humans "adopted" by the extraterrestrials -- they have shown videotapes which supposedly portray the faces of said non-human entities. The fact of the matter is that transcommunication techniques applied to alien contact have grown in popularity in recent years, particularly in Europe and Latin America.

Other contactees, such as Tefilo, have done the same by means of spirit recordings (psychophonies): they claim to have audio recordings in which voices or sounds made by extraterrestrials can be heard. A similar evolution has been evinced in the world of spiritism as regards communication techniques. It is for this reason that well-known contactee groups such as the Aztlan Group or Charlie Paz Wells make use of the Ouija board and automatic writing as a means for contacting extraterrestrials.

Obsolete means of communication through typtology or by means of automatic writing, Ouija or simiar means-- employed by both spiritist mediums and UFO contactees alike -- gave way to psychophonies, psychoimages and more recently, the use of computer programs which generate random letters which could theoretically be arranged by a non-human intelligence bent on sending the operator messages. What will the future hold?

While few, there are already some documented cases in which witnesses claim to have received messages from non-human intelligences by means of fax machines, answering machines and even e-mail. It would then seem obvious that that the evolution of communication and human technology will always set aside a place for these other types of communications--the allegedly

supernatural ones. Therfore, it is by no means foolish to suggest that in the near future we will learn about alleged contactees receiving holographic messages from aliens.

God Travels by Saucer

But the truest forecast, without a doubt, is that in the 21st century God will travel by UFO or not at all. The popularity of the extraterrestrial myth, as the 20th century progressed, has managed to surpass that of other modern myths and traditions. In many cases, statistics in favor of the belief of life in other planets have surpassed those pertaining to belief in God, the Virgin Mary or the hereafter.

In Spain alone, over 50% of surveyed citizens have indicated their belief in extraterrestrial UFOs. This belief has been promoted by the movies, television and literature. Furthermore, in recent years we have witnessed the behavior of publicists and marketing experts (in my opinion, the best means of gauging trends within a society, given that their job consists of using the best promotional devices to sell their products). The promotional campaigns and commercial products depicting images of flying saucers or aliens as devices is truly infinite. Why do P.R. specialists worldwide agree in employing the UFO image as the best and most attractive device for their campaigns? Evidently, because said image has proven to be among the most profitable for their campaigns: from children's toys to fashion and restaurant chains to the promotional efforts of the most powerful multinational corporations. Each passing day, the concepts of the UFO, the alien and the extraterrestrial are increasingly present in our culture. By next century, they will undoubtedly form an intrinsic and inseparable part of universal belief systems.

One of the most astonishing outbreaks of Chupacabras activity since the creature's appearance in the mid-90's occurred in Chile last year. Veteran UFO researcher Dr. Virgilio Sánchez Ocejo, who documented the paranormal predator's activity in Florida in 1996, visited the country to witness firsthand the effects of these depredations.

On The Trail of the Chupacabras

by Dr. Virgilio Sánchez Ocejo (Miami UFO Center)

We shall try to summarize the most crucial elements collected during our field research in the Chilean towns of Calama, María Elena and Tocopila. Names will be omitted for obvious reasons, nor will we repeat information gleaned from the reports so kindly provided by Ms. Liliana Núñez and which can be seen in our Miami Chupacabras website under the heading "Chupacabras in Chile." It is unnecessary to state that we met in person with many of the witnesses appearing in these reports to corroborate and expand details on their accounts, which shall appear on our website shortly.

The information appearing herein is documented with photographs, video and recordings.

It all started on March 17, 2000, when a vast light illuminated the skies over Calama and María Elena, being seen as far away as Tocopila. The first attacks to occur in this 2nd Region of Chile began on the outskirts of Calama. These are some of the accounts: a witness told us that he was able to see "two stars" which moved around the area whenever the attacks occurred. Another witness driving along the road from Baquedano to Calama saw a Chupacabras-creature carrying a dead fox on the edge of the highway. A llama and a goat were enigmatically slain within their cages at a grammar school without the night watchman ever hearing anything at all. Together with the school's director, we calculated that a total of 17 liters of blood was obtained from the slain animals and that it is impossible to know how the Chupacabras was able to enter and exit [the cage] through a space measuring barely 30 centimeters. A cyclist stopped in front of the local Lions' Club when he heard a moaning sound: he was startled beyond words to see a Chupacabras holding onto an exsanguinated dog. Caught in the act, the creature "levitated" toward the cyclist, still carrying the dog in its arms; gripped by panic, the cyclist pedaled away from the area as fast as he could. These are just some of the accounts not covered by the local press obtained directly from the eyewitnesses.

Over the course of the days we spent in María Elena, the testimonies we collected were so numerous that many of them are still under evaluation. Awaiting us in the town was a group of students we had coordinated beforehand over the Internet to obtain statements and collect plaster casts. We were surprised to find that a cast of one of the prints was IDENTICAL to the print casts from the 1996 Miami attacks. Comparative study is crucial in ufology, and it leads us to ask many questions, such as: how is it possible that the same creatures are appearing, now, in another country? Why did they wait 4 years [to do so]?

Taken to site where the students had made the plaster casts, we were able to see thousands of similar prints scattered throughout the terrain. My attention was drawn to the fact that the site is crisscrossed by the high-voltage lines next to the tracks employed by the local mining company's trains. The students pointed out three strange holes with a circumference of some 60 centimeters and 25 centimeters deep at the site. The measurements are not exact due to the wind and dust erosion, but I asked each of the students to stand on each of the three holes while I climbed onto a nearby mound, photographing and calculating the measurements of the triangle they formed: there was a distance of 4 meters between holes A and B and some 7 meters between B and C. Had I discovered the tripodal landing gear of a UFO that landed to disgorge the blood predators?

According to the triangle, I calculated that the object would have had a circumference of some 30 meters and was heavy enough to leave an imprint 25 centimeters into the ground. But that wasn't all: from the mound on which I stood I was able to see the thousands of prints going off in a single direction--toward the town of María Elena. There were no prints on the sides nor toward the back, where the tripodal landing gear marks could be seen.

I can honestly state that the misnamed Chupacabras phenomenon is part and parcel of the UFO phenomenon. I was able to ascertain that it isn't a genetic terrestrial experiment, as I thought, nor the product of some known or unknown animal. I have no doubt that it forms part of the UFO phenomenon.

This fact will create a new chapter within the field of research, and I'm certain that many will call it into question and attack me. My intention isn't to convince anyone, but my conscience will not let me conceal the evidence discovered during my field research. I hope others may be able to verify it.

But the matter doesn't rest here. We arrived at María Elena on Saturday, July 22nd, and learned from eyewitnesses that at 8:30 a.m. on July 20th, the Chilean Air Force had dropped a bomb at a location between María Elena and Pedro Valdívía. The explosion caused tremors and shattered glass throughout María Elena, causing panic among the population.

The first explanation spread among the townsfolk was that it was a bomb accidentally released by a fighter. The second one is that a Chilean Air Force jet had broken the sound barrier flying at low altitude, and finally, that the bomb had been dropped to kill some *Jotes* (vultures).

Witnesses claimed that following the explosion, pebbles landed on rooftops and that this had not been the only bomb dropped. Another bomb was dropped near the town of Quillagua, approximately 100 kilometers northwest of María Elena, on July 13th. We tried to drive along the road that leads to Pedro Valdívía to see if we could find the crash site, but were detoured at an intersection by the *Carabineros* (the Chilean quasi-military police). The site was still cordoned off by the authorities and cars could not pass. We were forced to return to María Elena.

I now ask you: If I say that the Chilean Air Force bombed two Chupacabras lairs, who is going to believe me? What type of bombs have been designed to slay these entities? If these entities conceal themselves in the region's caves, why didn't they employ dynamite to seal the caves and avoid widespread panic? What kind of pressure or desperation in controlling these attacks the Chilean and U.S. agencies involved in the process to choose to drop bombs in broad daylight, unmindful of the repercussions on the inhabitants? I have more questions than I do answers.

I was able to verify certain things, such as strange van-type vehicles and armored cars transiting along the highways, black helicopters flying almost noiselessly and at light-post level, chasing a Chupacabras from one rooftop to the next. At the Calama Airport, one witness looked under the tarp covering a private LearJet and saw that it had a NASA logo on its tail and wings. U.S. nationals using Mexican interpreters were seen throughout the region.

On the other hand, the María Elena Museum featured a display entitled *Las Ofrendas del Desierto* (Desert Offerings) which explained that the Atacaman Indians made animal offerings to their gods (UFOs). The gods (UFOs) returned the animals completely drained of blood and the Indians consumed the flesh, burying the remains under stone structures dubbed *apachecta*. The display shows the corpse of a dog found under one such *apachecta* or ceremonial structure.

We couldn't stand before this display and not think that today, given the absence of native peoples, that the gods (UFOs) have created the blood-carrying Chupacabras and released them in the communities that provided them with animal blood in ages past--voluntarily, as offerings--to obtain the blood that they appear to need from time to time.

In closing, I will say that in the days I spent in María Elena it was possible not only to feel the presence of these entities in my bedroom at night, but their foetid smell as well. When I complained, my hosts changed my lodgings, only to have the experience repeat itself. I was later told that under María Elena there are caves through which these entities move about, and that efforts have been made to clean them out due to the foul odor that rises to the surface. What is more--upon my return to Miami, my family was also able to perceive the smell and we are currently trying to wash and re-wash all of my travel garments to no effect. Even the suitcase has been left open in the garage to see if the penetrating odor can be dispelled.

This experience was not mine alone. I was able to corroborate it with Mr. Jaime Ferrer of the Calama UFO Center, with whom we spent time in Calama and María Elena.

Possibly one of the most distressing aspects of the UFO abduction phenomenon is the "bedroom visitation" scenario. Contributing Editor and MEXICO WATCH columnist Dr. Rafael A. Lara Palmeros gives us a physician's perspective on the phenomenon.

UFOs, Personality and the "Visitor Experience"

by Dr. Rafael A. Lara Palmeros

In UFO research, the "visitor experience" is a central theme in normal people who report UFO phenomena, and has been reported in a variety of forms over the centuries. Following the experience, there are behavioral changes and alterations in the perception and interpretation of unusual events.

The "visitor experience" is a more intense variant of the "sense of presence", a phenomenon frequently reported by normal people (approximately 30% out of 500 adults who have been evaluated in neuroscience laboratories over the past 15 years have reported such experiences. The presence is felt most frequently in the early morning hours, if the person is asleep, and he/she will awaken suddenly, often feeling a sense of fear or immobility. These experiences are thought to be correlated with mesiobasal

(amygdaloid-hypnoccampal) portions of the temporal lobes. These areas of the brain are associated, *inter alia*, with the experience of meaningfulness, the sense of self and its relationship to space-time (with its religious or "cosmic" association), fear, dreams, the experience of movement (such as spinning or floating), smell, and the retrieval and storage of memory. Consequently, there should be--and there are--references to a sense of presence, feelings of spinning or floating, or vibrations, dreamlike sequences and fear (or irritability). Given that an important part of the temporal lobe receives visual information from the edges of the visual field, flickering sensations can occur in upper peripheral vision.

If the neural substrate of the "visitor experience" is characterized by transient electrochemical fluctuations within the temporal lobe structure, then: a) the phenomenological nature of these experiences should reflect temporal lobe functions, and b) people with personality profiles that are strongly correlated with temporal lobe lability should be prone to having these experiences. Both of these observations have been substantiated by clinical evidence. That either endogenous or exogenous (surgical) stimulation of deep temporal lobe structures--such as the hippocampus and especially the amygdala, can evoke specific pheonmenological patterns, is well established. Patients with partial complex or limbic (temporal lobe) epilepsy frequently report such symptoms as a sense of a presence; depersonalization (feelings of unreality or out-of-the-body experiences); hearing and/or knowing from "internal stources", vestibular sensations, anxiety or panic. Females may have erotic experiences. Visual phenomena vary from shadows, entities or colors in the peripheral field to complex animated sequences dominated by substantial fantasy elements that are not always simple reiterations of personal experience.

Most importantly, the percipient is frequently convinces the what he or she has perceived is real; although details may not be clear, the person is sure that something profound has occurred.

Typial behaviors betweens seizures included a widening of affect; multiple references to psi phenomena; the conviction that one has communed with an entity or god and has been chosen for a special destiny; hypergraphia--obsession with themes such as the nature of the universe--and the desire to proselytize. Invariably tehre is amnesia and a history of time loss. Affective disorders and alterations in sexual behavior are common. There is now evidence of a continuum of temporal lability or sensitivity. People who display complex partial epilepsy without convulsions occupy the extreme portion of this continuum.

One prototypic account of "visitor experience" offers ample support to the temporal lobe factor: Whitley Streiber's *Communion*, a classic UFO abduction report. The experience was associated with the predominant metaphor of the sense of a presence, swirling or vortical sensations, internal vibrations, floating sensations, alterations in perception, frank psi phenomena and a deep sense of meaning. The person developed the

conviction that he was chosen, and the desire emerged to deliver the cosmic message to mankind. The experience was invariably considered to be "real".

Streiber's description of fundamentally aversive sensations (associated with intense smells, hypervigilance and anal sphincter images) should reflect anomalous activity within the anterior parahippocampal gyrus, with special involvement of the amygdaloid complex and the adjacent uncus.

One of the most common features of the UFO experience is the encounter with small humanoids who often have large heads, thus resembling a human foetus. There is evidence that these experiences are adult modifications of perinatal memories. It has been established that the foetus has the cerebral capacity to detect and consolidate the experience.

On the other hand, severe trauma, such as early sexual abuse, could be equally effective because of the consequent repression of unpleasant memories serving as source material for the experience. The importance of the temporal lobe factor is strongly suggested by the moderate intercorrelations in patient populations between temporal lobe epilepsy, multiple personality disorders and early child abuse.

EX LIBRIS:
A Random Sampling of Hispanic Ufology in Print

The new millennium is hitting the ground running, judging by the rumble of printing presses overseas. In our next issue we hope to be able to bring you a review of Contributing Editor **Manuel Carballal**'s landmark book on Spain's intelligence agency, the CESID, and its role in a number of cover-ups, capers and covert activity, some of it having to do with UFOs. We heard on the grapevine that Contributing Editor **Lucy Guzmán** and her husband **Orlando Plá** are working on a book that is to be released later this year. Stay tuned for details.

Proof that contacteeism is alive and well south of the border can be found in Martha Rosenthal's *Hermanos de las Estrellas... ¿Dónde Están?* (Caracas:Editorial Texto, 2001. 205 pages. ISBN-980-07-6960-9) which we can perhaps translate as "Wherefore Art Thou, Space Brothers?" without causing Shakespearean scholars too much distress. Although contacteeism is a spent force in the United States, it occupies a privileged position in South America, where the usually blond, benign non-humans are believed to be on a mission to give mankind a boost up the evolutionary ladder (where have I heard that metaphor before? Hmmm...). The book contains transcripts of dialogues (telepathic or through automated writing) with entities such as Amir and Ashtar -- the latter a fixture of contacteeism around the world -- and quotes from experiencers. Dr. Rosenthal sums up her beliefs as follows: "The contactee experience can be an extraordinary experience from the standpoint of growth, or else can lead the percipient to believe that he or she has been "chosen". A significant number of the latter imbue the experience with a certain religious element. In this way, they

have demarcated contacteeism with promises of salvation based on the erroneous possibility of a millennial apocalypse, from which Messianic messages tend to arise."

Hermanos de las Estrellas...¿Dónde Están? is a thoughtful, well-written venture into the contactee gestalt. INEXPLICATA gives it

★ ★ ★

Ordering information: contact <martha@eldish.net>

Although long since out of print, Ignacio Cabria García's *Entre Ufologos, Creyentes y Contactados* (Santander: Cuadernos de Ufología, 1993. 295 pages, ISBN 84-604-7077-6) is a *summa* of Spain's contentious ufological history since the 1950s. Described by the author as "a social history of UFOs in Spain, the book is a marvelous blend of cultural and societal forces which shaped belief in the phenomenon (movies, television programs, books etc.) and the colorful personalities who were there at the beginning. The reader can find similes between Fernando Sesma and Jim Moseley, Eduardo Buelta and Grey Barker -- apparently similar personality types were attracted to ufology at the time on both sides of the Atlantic.

Cabria peppers his book with photographs, charts and maps as he discusses the ebb and flow of belief in aliens and extraterrestrial spaceships, the rise of the skeptical movement, and the three distinct generations of Spanish UFO researchers. At 295 pages, *Entre Ufologos, Creyentes y Contactados* is a world-class treatment of regional ufology which deserves to be alongside any similar compilation from the U.S. or the U.K.

INEXPLICATA unhesitatingly gives it an unheard-of ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ordering Information: Cuadernos de Ufología, Rualasal 22, 39001 Santander, España

MEXICO WATCH:
Keeping an Eye on our Southern Neighbor's Skies

MEXICO: HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR 2000

by Dr. Rafael A. Lara Palmeros

In the wake of the Millennial fever that shook the world, our country continued providing us an endless array of events concerning not only UFOs, but cryptoarchaeology, paranormal phenomena and cryptozoology as well.

This is a detailed report on the most outstanding events that took place in the Year 2000.

January 5, 2000: At 00:35 hrs. on January 5, 2000, a considerable number of witnesses observed a large object moving at a moderate speed over the skies of Alto Lucero and Mesa de Guadalupe in the state of Veracruz. Numerous witnesses describe

the object as being a square structure that gave off a reddish-yellow light without making a single sound. A photograph taken by one "Mr. Ruiz" shows a polygonal shape with well defined contours, yellow in color on a dark background. While some local papers published said photograph, we do not know the technical characteristics of the still camera or the film employed.

February 14, 2000: On this day, one of the most important UFO cases in Mexico's UFO history took place. Countless witnesses, including radio operators, civilians and more importantly, police officers, saw a UFO some 10 meters in diameter with spotlights that gave off a variety of colors (green, blue, red, etc.) flying over Mexico City for over an hour. It received extraordinary coverage in the media, both radio and television, though mainly by the "TV Azteca" network, which provided detailed information on the event. Some enthusiasts, however, did not hesitate to describe it as "the most important UFO event of the Millennium..."(sic). The main sighting took place in Azcapotzalco, in northern Mexico City. The Institute of Hispanic Ufology provided ample details to its English-speaking readers through its Inexplicata journal.

February 23, 2000: At 2:45 a.m. on this day, it became possible to observe strange lights over the coastline of Veracruz as they moved toward the sea in the vicinity of Isla de Sacrificios, scant kilometers away from the port of Veracruz itself. Fishermen Francisco Domínguez, Aurelio Estrada and Luis Martínez encountered a circular structure, of undetermined weight, which shone in the early morning darkness. They report the incident to the harbormaster's office on the 24th, which in turn notifies the Instituto Tecnológico de Veracruz. This writer went to the port of Veracruz to see this object, which was a light ochre colored sphere with clear signs of having experienced high temperatures after passing through the atmosphere. It was about 16 centimeters tall with an estimated weight of 30 kilogramas. The object was ultimately removed to the Instituto Tecnológico de Veracruz for subsequent analysis. To date, its composition and ultimate fate are unknown. Despite our insistence on the matter, no reply has been forthcoming.

March 13, 2000: In the settlement of Los Limones, in the state of Veracruz, archaeology students of the Universidad Veracruzana led by Lic. Marino Real Trujillo and this writer, discovered an important archaeological area composed of primitive pyramids, remains of ancient pottery and above all, an astounding number of petroglyphs arranged in enormous boulders. Spirals, concentric lines, human shapes apparently moving through the air in structures resembling cabins, can be clearly made out. This area, barely 5 kilometers away from Los Limones, is unknown from an archaeological standpoint, and it has not been possible to place it within a given Pre-Hispanic period. We must note that the Director of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology of the State of Veracruz, Dr. Rubén Morante, was advised of the discovery and he subsequently visited the area to confirm the events.

April 20, 2000: On this day, a multidisciplinary study which included 2 clinical neurologists, 1 neurosurgeon, 3 psychiatrists a specialist in hypnotic regression, 3 psychologists and a pneumo-allergy specialist focused on the strange experiences undergone by 16 individuals, ranging from rural primary school instructors to rabbit and armadillo

hunters, who had encountered strange spherical lights, some of them aggressive, and apparently experienced a loss of time. Electroencephalographic tests, psychological tests, frontal and lateral cranial X-rays, angiographies of the carotid artery and CAT scans proved that none of the sixteen cases showed any signs of pathology. In other words, no evidence of mental, physical or psychic illness was discovered. However, two of the patients presented X-ray images showing unusual structures with metallic characteristics located at the cranial level. One of them underwent a craniotomy, revealing the presence of metallic material composed of nickel and small amounts of titanium. All of this research was supported with video and audio backup with the consent of the persons studied. A preliminary report was published within the country in a UFO magazine. All of the cases originate in the Chavarrillo region and "Rancho Viejo", located some 3 kilometers from the state capital of Veracruz. These areas are well-known for their UFO sightings.

May 16, 2000: Renowned Monterrey residents Jerónimo Flores and Santiago Iturria reported the presence of a large silver-hued, metallic object flying at a low altitude along the slopes of Cerro de la Silla in a heavily populated area. The photographs taken were analyzed and appear to be authentic. Curiously, reports of a strange winged creature, approximately three feet tall, became intensified. The entity is covered with something similar to feathers and has enormous round eyes: it is dubbed "Owl-Man".

May 27, 2000: Medical tests begin in earnest on a 27 year-old woman known only as "Diana" who claims to be beset by unusual paranormal experiences (clairvoyance, dermovision, poltergeist phenomena at home, etc.) following contact with strange luminous spheres measuring between 7 and 8 meters in diameter which appeared in her back yard in the city of Jalapa, Veracruz. The studies took place in the presence of a psychiatrist, her mother, her boyfriend, a family friend and this writer. Initial psychological tests were normal, as were her cranial X-rays. A CAT scan has not yet been scheduled.

June 21, 2000: At 00:40 hrs, massive luminous objects are reported over the Alchichica Lagoon, an area known for its major UFO sightings and electromagnetic anomalies. Said objects (a total of three) were approximately 300 meters over the lagoon surface and were disk-shaped, glowing with an intense yellow light and enveloped in a kind of "fog". There were some twenty eyewitnesses to this display, between local residents and persons interested in the UFO phenomenon. The entire event lasted some 2 minutes and was captured by several videotape cameras. Alchichica is located on the state line between Veracruz and Puebla.

August 15, 2000: Following a decades-long delay, the important declassified documents obtained by researchers Stan Gordon and Scott Corrales through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are made known in Mexico. Said document details the events of February 7, 1967 in the town of General Terán in the state of Nuevo Leon, and NASA's confidential involvement in the recovery of an odd spherical artifact seemingly made of titanium. Following a conscientious analysis by Abernathy, the U.S. investigator on site, it was determined that the object was probably a rocket component. However, the investigator returned to Washington in March 1967 to prepare a full report. According

to confidential sources, said document was indeed prepared and the case remains a mystery. This case was made public by a Mexican magazine specializing in the subject of UFOs.

September 2, 2000: A million-dollar scam involving Jaime Maussán Flota becomes public knowledge. In earlier months, Ing. Arturo Roble Gil appears before Maussán to provide him with photographs about an alleged UFO seen in the Santa Fé, Presa Madin, Condado de Sayavedra region. Without any prior investigation of either the photograph or the place it was taken, Maussán seizes the photographs and parades their author on a number of Televisa programs, showing him off and boasting that these are the best photographs of the century (sic). Said photos are presented on the *Hoy* TV program, on which Maussán was interviewed by Alfredo Adame, as well as the *Otro Rollo* and *Cristina* shows. The Mexican researcher claims to be fully convinced of the authenticity of said photographs, and bases the promotional poster for the Third World Congress on the UFO phenomenon on them. The poster promoted the names of Sergio Ruiz García, Victor Quezada, Maussán and Ing. Arturo Robles Gil, the copyright holder. However, 8 months after researching the case, it is considered to be a hoax, creating a conflict between Televisa and Television Azteca which ends with the dismissal of several individuals, including Sergio Ruiz García, a noted recipient of the Golden Palm award for journalism. This hoax becomes yet another involving Maussán, his subordinates and collaborators (such as the Carlos Díaz case, Zacapu, Michoacán, etc.).

October 5, 2000: Sightings of the so-called Owl-Man intensify in the mountainous region of Nuevo León. Several local communities associate the presence of said entity with animal mutilations. Unfortunately, Spain's *Karma-7* magazine publishes an article associating this entity with the Chupacabras and makes it responsible for the animal deaths.

October 23, 2000: An important Pre-Hispanic region is found on the border between the states of Puebla and Veracruz in a location known as El Triunfo. Most notable is the presence of a cliff some seven meters high by twenty meters wide holding an infinite number of antropomorphic, zoomorphic, spiral and other figures, apparently fishes, and a considerable number of engraved signs. It took three days and nights to outline the petroglyphs in order to make them legible. The area, hitherto unstudied, has remained so for centuries. To date it has not been possible to classify it within a given Pre-Hispanic period.

November 3, 2000: An unidentified person provides Lic. Marino Leal Trujillo a photograph-- showing three lights forming an apparent triangle--taken one or two weeks earlier in the town of Chavarrillo, Veracruz, (notorious for its UFO sightings) during a family celebration. Nearly 40 witnesses attested having seen a great brightness that was apparently related to a large "floodlight". One of the guests at the party took a photo of the light; upon developing it, the presence of 2 other lights forming a triangle was noticed. The photographs were then given to me and after interviewing Lic. Leal Trujillo and photo's authenticity was confirmed after showing it to a number of experts. The electronic and print media gave little coverage to this event.

November 27, 2000: In view of the insistence by a UFO-related publication, an effort is made to reopen the case involving the "foam-rubber alien" found in Jalapa. It now turns out that on

April 19, 2000, Sixto Paz Wells paid a visit to the "contactee" who owns the alleged extraterrestrial to tell him that the foam rubber figure indeed hailed from Zeta Reticuli (???) and that it was very important that the case be made known, since the investigation conducted by this author was "baseless" (???). The magazine in question ordered its correspondent in Jalapa to reopen the case and determine the extraterrestrial origin of the foam rubber figure.